

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, April 17, 2012
10 am – Noon
Lane Transit District
3500 East 17th Avenue – Eugene, Oregon

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Hugh Massengill, Chair	Bill Morganti
Misty Brazell	Eleanor Mulder
Mike Cetto	Ed Necker (LTD Board representative, ex officio)
Aline Goddard	Annie Saville
Stefan Kwiatkowski	Reneé Van Norman
Ruth Linoz	Scott Whetham
Gail Lundeen	Patti Little

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mary Otten, Vice Chair

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES:

Paul Blaylock

OTHERS PRESENT:

Janice Friend, captioner	April Georgi
Erica Abbe	Kris Lyon
Pete Barron	Dennis Turner
David Braunschweiger	

STAFF:

Susan Hekimoglu
Terry Parker
Rand Stamm

I. Call to order

Mr. Massengill called the meeting of the Accessible Transportation Committee (ATC) to order at 10:03 a.m.

II. Introductions, Announcements, Agenda Review

Those present introduced themselves.

Ms. Parker offered congratulations to Alternative Work Concepts which had celebrated its 25th anniversary with a party the previous Saturday.

Ms. Hekimoglu announced that beginning in June the committee meetings would be held at the Next Stop Center at the Eugene Station. Accessible Services and Customer Services were merging into one program that would be housed at the downtown station. If the room at the station was inadequate, staff might look at meeting room options in the Library. The June meeting would be Ms. Parker's last meeting as LTD's Accessible Services Manager and refreshments would be served. Ms. Parker added that she would continue to work part-time for the next four months on the next discretionary grant cycle. (Note: LTD's new *Accessible and Customer Services Manager* will be introduced.)

Ms. Lundeen inquired about the availability of parking for meetings held downtown. Ms. Parker responded that parking was free on the streets around the Eugene Station for the first two hours. Committee members could opt to ride the bus to meetings. Ms. Hekimoglu said that she also would investigate other parking options. Mr. Whetham added that assistance with directions to the meeting would be provided. Mr. Kwiatkowski suggested that members could park for free at Amazon and take the bus from there.

III. Audience Participation

There were no comments from members of the public.

IV. ACTION: Minutes Approval, March 20, 2012

Mr. Necker pointed out that he should be listed as an LTD Board member and ex officio member of the committee.

MOTION: Mr. Morganti moved, seconded by Mr. Kwiatkowski, to approve the minutes of March 20, 2012, as corrected. The motion carried 11:1:0, with Ms. Van Norman abstaining.

Ms. Parker commended Ms. Feldman's thoroughness in preparing the committee's minutes.

V. ACTION: Fiscal Year 2012 Revised and 2013 Special Transportation Fund Budget

LTD acts as the regional coordinator of transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities and, on a more limited basis, for people with low incomes. LTD Accessible Services uses federal, state, and local funds to pay for and support transportation programs and services throughout Lane County. Money typically comes to LTD in two ways: through (1) formula distribution or allocations or (2) grants for specific projects or activities. Oregon's Special Transportation Fund for Older Adults and People with Disabilities (STF) has both a yearly formula allocation and a grant program which is incorporated into the *Public Transit Discretionary Grant Program*. Last year, the Committee completed its review of projects recommended for funding through the two-year statewide grant program. Fiscal Year 2012-2013 would be the second year of the funding cycle for Special Transportation Fund (STF) dollars, which were considered local funds and often were combined with federal grants to satisfy local match requirements for selected projects. There was an In-District and Out-of-District distribution of the STF formula money. In-District allocations were for projects performed within LTD's fixed-route service boundary, and Out-of-District allocations were for those projects performed outside of LTD's boundary. For the coming fiscal year FY13, staff had applied for additional funds for some services, and had been notified that the funds would be received. Overall project budgets included this additional funding with associated changes in the respective STF allocations.

Ms. Parker recalled that the Special Transportation Fund alone used to be the major source of funding but over the years Accessible Services had received more federal

grants and general fund money for its programs. By coordinating and pulling resources together, it had been possible to leverage federal money that required a match. Therefore most services are now funded with a mix of revenue sources and the administration of funds is managed within LTD's Accessible Services Fund.

Ms. Parker reviewed the budget sheet showing costs for each project or service which provided a big picture view of Accessible Services funding. Expenses were broken out by in-district and out-of-district services, with one additional expense line item for county-wide coordination.

Ms. Parker pointed out that there was a separate category for vehicle maintenance. Several small programs were included in the *RideSource* Metro vehicle preventive maintenance.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked about the boundaries of the *RideSource* Escort. Ms. Parker explained that it included all of Lane County. The *RideSource* boundary extended three quarters of a mile outside from the bus routes in the Eugene-Springfield area as required for ADA service. The LTD boundary also includes rural routes but does not extend to the entire county. Because of the types of funds received, Accessible Services provided some services to the entire county.

Ms. Mulder wanted to know when the budget had been revised. Ms. Parker replied that she was in the process of making revisions to the FY12 budget based on actuals through January. Having real numbers at mid-year allowed her to make a best guess and somewhat conservative estimate of what was needed going forward for the rest of this fiscal year. After those revisions were made, she created the FY13 budget.

Moving down the expense sheet from the services that were part of the *RideSource* package through the Call Center, Ms. Parker reviewed the in-district expenses that helped support other riders. She noted that Mental Health Transportation for people who found it difficult to use either fixed route or paratransit (*RideSource*) was managed through White Bird and not the Call Center. She also said that paratransit costs were reduced by the transit training and host services.

Mobility Management was a somewhat new term for coordination. Federal dollars were used to hire Senior and Disability Services and Alternative Work Concepts to do in-home assessments to determine what transportation best fit the individual's needs and capability.

A South Lane item appeared in both the in-district and out-of-district expenses. South Lane Wheels provides services to rural areas as well as to area within LTD's service area. The City of Cottage Grove receives federal 5311 funds for Small Cities and LTD passes on other funds to the City of Cottage Grove to help support the program.

Ms. Parker summarized that for FY13, \$5.2 million would be needed for in-district services. While only \$4.7 million was estimated for FY12 expenditures, the uncertainties around fuel and insurance costs were driving the increase for FY13.

By going to a cost allocation methodology within the Call Center, it was now possible to bill staff time based on activity. All services within the Call Center were receiving allocations based on the distribution of actual recorded costs by program.

The overall Accessible Services FY12 budget had projected \$5.7 million in expenses but costs were expected to only be a little over \$5.1 million this year. The FY13 budgeted expenses would be \$5.8 million

Next Ms. Parker showed slides that reviewed the anticipated revenue for FY13. She pointed out that the Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC) provided \$12,000 in FY12, but would not be a revenue source in FY13. Increasing ridership resulted in an increase in RideSource's fare revenue, with around \$300,000 in fares in FY12 and close to \$320,000 projected for FY13. Federal money designated for older adults and people with disabilities was budgeted at \$1.1 million for FY12 but would actually be \$1.5 million and in FY13 would rise from \$1.166 to 1.534 million. Ms. Parker emphasized that Special Transportation Fund revenue was very flexible and could be used to leverage additional funds.

Responding to Mr. Necker's question about the FDA eliminating discretionary grants, Ms. Parker said that was an entirely different conversation and that those earmarked projects did not affect the funding being discussed. Eventually these small grants (specifically Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom) would be affected by reauthorization but for now they were still available and managed by the State. Ms. Parker informed that committee that Accessible Services received about five percent of LTD's general fund which was significant because it served less than five percent of the people with expensive per person services. Mr. Necker noted that the general fund was between \$36 and \$38 million and that Medicaid medical provided an additional \$5 million.

Noting that actual FY12 STF expenditures would exceed what had been budgeted, Ms. Parker said that the general fund would fill the gap if necessary. However the bottom line numbers showed that while \$5,705,700 had been budgeted for Accessible Services expenditures, the actual amount spent would be \$5,164,300. Next year's total budget would be \$5,803,150.

Next Ms. Parker reviewed the proposed STF allocations that supported each project. She indicated that there were slight discrepancies due to the rounding of some numbers. She told the committee that it was responsible for determining whether the in- and out-of-district allocations were acceptable.

Ms. Parker highlighted an increase in the RideSource Metro allocation and pointed out that after all other funds were allocated to other programs, whatever was left went into this category. South Lane was receiving an increase from the 5310 program so the STF could be reduced without reducing the total amount of funding received. Such decreases in STF funding were an indicator of how other revenue sources were shoring up program budgets. It was important to look at expenses and revenues together in order to understand the balancing act Ms. Parker had to perform as she prepared the budget and looked at which revenues were most strategic to use in specific programs. For example, the Transit Host and Training program would begin using Job Access/New Freedom money instead of general funds.

Ms. Parker explained that the out-of-district programs did not have LTD general funds to back them up and when these STF funds were expended the conversation had to be about changing services. The total STF in-district proposed allocations matched the STF in-district formula allocation but the out-of-district amounts did not balance. The FY12 deficit was \$41,000 and the FY13 deficit was \$37,000 so those amounts would come from the out-of-district reserve. This means that in FY14-15 the reserve would be down to \$50,000 and the discussion of out-of-district services and what was the best value would be more difficult. Ms. Hekimoglu would become the Rural Service Coordinator and she would look carefully at the analysis of what was needed. It was likely that local cities would have to increase their contributions if they wanted services to continue.

Ms. Van Norman had questions about the local match on the expense side of the budget. Ms. Parker responded that it was confusing because the services provided to Pearl Buck had evolved over time and other agencies might want to have the same

arrangement as Pearl Buck. They had been required to pay a match for their grants but because this was very difficult for them to do, the task was made easier by allocating some LTD general funds. It is a goal to use only STF funds and local agency money as federal grant match for agency-based services like Pearl Buck.

MOTION: Mr. Morganti moved, seconded by Ms. Lundeen, that the Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee approve the Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Special Transportation Fund allocations as presented and forward a recommendation of approval to the LTD Board and Budget Committee. The motion carried, 8:4:0, with Mr. Whetham, Ms. Linoz, Ms. Van Norman, and Ms. Goddard abstaining.

VI. Fiscal Year 2012-2013 LTD Fare Proposal

LTD was evaluating a cash fare increase for 2012. The last cash fare increase occurred in 2008, when adult fares increased from \$1.25 to \$1.50. An increase to \$1.75 translated to a 16.7 percent increase, or slightly more than 4 percent annually. Because the discussion had been cut short due to time limitations at the March meeting, LTD Service Planning Accessibility and Marketing Director, Andy Vobora had come back to the April meeting to discuss the proposal.

Mr. Vobora described a minor routing change on the #1 route in which it would no longer travel down Pearl. Because the #12 served the Pearl Street corridor, there would be no net loss of service and new route signs would be posted at stops. As frequent users of the #1, Mr. Kwiatkowski and Mr. Massengill thought the change would work well. Ms. Saville was pleased by the change because turning off Pearl onto 5th was difficult for drivers of 40-foot buses. Mr. Vobora said that he would look at that intersection and the size of buses using it.

Mr. Vobora reported a small turnout for the first public hearing on the fare change proposal and conjectured that either people had accepted the change or they had given up hope of influencing the board's final decision.

Mr. Barron said that people were aware that operational costs had far outpaced the cost of riding. Mr. Morganti hoped that people would not discontinue riding because of the cost.

Ms. Parker mentioned that a postcard had been sent recently to RideSource riders and they may not have been aware of the proposal in time to testify at the first hearing. She expected to receive written and telephone comments from some riders.

Ms. Parker opined that some RideSource users may need to ration the trips for which they used RideSource if cost was an issue. She shared that very low income people on Medicaid had their medical trips paid for but not their shopping trips. She expected that some RideSource users may shift to using the Shopper Service because of its lower cost.

Mr. Necker believed that the \$.50 increase would mean that some fixed income workers who worked 5, 6, or 7 days a week at Goodwill would see an inordinate amount of their income go for bus fare. Ms. Parker said that was a very real concern but pointed out that many agencies bought passes for their workers or they had group passes so she wondered how many of those workers were actually paying out-of-pocket. Mr. Braunschweiger agreed to look at the number of frequent riders who were paying cash fares and e-mail the information to committee members.

Mr. Necker emphasized the importance of hearing from RideSource riders.

Mr. Vobora reminded the committee that a second public hearing on the proposed fare increase would be held at the Library on May 14 at 5:30 p.m.

VII. LTD Origin and Destination Study

Every four years, LTD conducted an intensive survey of LTD riders. This survey, called the Origin and Destination Survey, served as the basis for analyzing changes in riding habits and in rider demographics. The results also were used by the Lane Council of Governments to update the regional travel model. Riders were surveyed on all routes in the LTD system, and 8,617 surveys were distributed by surveyors who boarded each bus. Approximately 6,647 completed surveys were returned and tabulated as part of the 2011 survey results.

Mr. Vobora told the committee that the entire report was available on the website. During the nine-day survey period, 7,477 surveys were completed for an 87 percent return rate, with 1.1 percent completed in Spanish.

Mr. Vobora provided a comparative review of the current survey with results from past surveys. He highlighted that the results for frequency of use were 22% used the bus 1-3 days per week, 51% rode 4-6 days per week and 27% rode 7 days. The survey also looked at the ratio of cars to drivers and personal vehicle option by student status.

The survey showed that 65% of LTD riders were 30 years old or younger. Ms. Parker conjectured that there may be generational differences in the perception of transit.

Additional survey results looked at rider frequency and age, household income of riders versus household income for the general population, student and nonstudent status, ethnicity of riders, whether riders were new or long-term users of transit, trip purposes, and number of buses used to get to destinations.

Of particular interest to committee members, 4.8% of riders said they needed assistance. There were 125 responders saying they needed stop announcements, 100 needing a lift or ramp, 70 needing driver assistance, 63 needing personal assistance, 27 needing a service animal, and 27 needing travel training. Needs varied with age, with the highest percentage of those needing assistance being over the age of 60.

Regarding fare payment, the survey found that 54% of rides were prepaid with day pass and cash payments accounting for only 25% of rides.

The survey compared EmX riders to regular riders and found that fewer EmX riders had a personal vehicle option, and a large percentage of UO students were EmX riders.

Mr. Vobora was pleased to report that 75% of respondents rated LTD as meeting their needs well or very well. Helpfulness of LTD drivers was rated highly as were customer service employees. Receiving more neutral or lower rankings were schedule information at stops, frequency of the bus being on schedule, and comfort while waiting for the bus. Frequency, comfort, and schedule all were ranked higher on EmX than on regular buses, but helpfulness of drivers was rated lower on EmX. Compared to the 2007 survey results, there was an overall reduction in problems experienced by respondents. Service improvements riders wanted to see varied but the top priorities were more weekend and later evening service which was the same as in 2007.

Mr. Vobora encouraged committee members to review the entire report online. Ms. Linoz said that it would be useful to have some information on rural service pulled from the survey. Mr. Vobora said that would be possible.

VIII. Program Updates

Accessible Services Update: The Accessible Services group was undergoing some big changes. With Terry Parker's changing role with LTD at the end of June (and retirement 12/31/2012), a replacement hiring was well underway with the position posting closing on Friday April 13. The change in Accessible Services leadership created an opportunity for LTD to create a new customer-focused team of employees, combining the Customer Service staff at that Eugene Station and the Accessible Services staff. Because both groups focused their efforts on serving customers, fixed-route and paratransit, this consolidation made a lot of sense. Within the next few weeks, the Accessible Services staff would be relocating to the Eugene Station. The new manager would be responsible for both Accessible Services and Customer Service.

LTD Board Recap: The LTD Board held the first of two public hearings on the proposal to increase the cash fare on April 9, 2012. The next public hearing was scheduled for May 14. Also on April 9, the Board approved the Fiscal Year 2013-2020 Capital Improvement Program Plan and the Fiscal Year 2013-2020 Long-Range Financial Plan.

RideSource Call Center

Kris Lyon reported that the center was averaging 800 calls per day with the number increasing every month. Over 14,000 Oregon Health Plan trips had been performed in March.

RideSource ADA Paratransit

Mr. Braunschweiger said that February had been a big month and March a little less so due to the snow and some routes not operating on some of the snow days.

South Lane County (Cottage Grove)

Ms. Linoz announced that they had started doing some ADA trips while drivers were waiting for will-call pick-ups in Eugene.

East Lane County (Oakridge)

Ms. Goddard commented that the Diamond Express had been very busy. The Tree Planting Festival would take place May 6 and would feature a parade at 11 a.m., and everyone was invited.

White Bird Clinic

Ms. Georgi noted that rides had decreased in February and March after an increase around the holiday season. White Bird was increasing services to four rides per month for each individual client for the rest of the fiscal year.

Other

Mr. Necker announced that the LTD Budget Committee would meet May 16, at 6:30 p.m. following a 4:30 p.m. Board meeting.

Mr. Morganti was curious on when Accessibility Services and Customer Service would complete their merge. Ms. Parker explained that an exact date was not yet set but that Accessibility Services planned to move to the Eugene Station before Ms. Parker's replacement started work. She anticipated a good transition and said that both staffs participated in a workshop the previous Saturday and had begun building rapport.

Responding to Ms. Mulder's inquiry, Ms. Hekimoglu said that the Coordinated Plan Work Group (Hugh Massengill, Bill Morganti, Gail Lundeen, Eleanor Mulder, Misty Brazell, and Renee Van Norman) would meet sometime in May and that she would work on scheduling the meeting via e-mail. Ms. Van Norman requested a copy of the Coordinated Plan.

X. Adjourn

The next regularly scheduled meeting was set for Tuesday, June 19, 2012.

Mr. Massengill adjourned the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

(Recorded by Mary Feldman)